

Disadvantaged Communities and Environmental Justice in California Water



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Environmental Justice



“The fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.”

CA Government Code Section 65040.12

Environmental Justice Applied



“To enforce the fair treatment clause, four key requirements must be met:

- Disadvantaged and disproportionately impacted communities must be identified and engaged.
- The water-related needs of these communities must be identified, and potential solutions developed and funded.
- The impact of water management decisions on these communities must be considered and mitigated.
- All State programs must be evaluated to document progress.”

California State Water Plan Update 2009, Chapter 7, p 41

Disadvantaged Communities (DACs)



“... a community with an annual median household income that is less than 80 percent of the statewide median household income.”

Water Code Section 79505.5

Statewide Preferences and Programs for DACs

Drinking Water

Wastewater

Flood

(See Handout)

Urban DAC Pockets



Challenges Identifying Urban DACs

- May not be identifiable using census data
- 80% of statewide median household income may not capture some urban DACs

Opportunities to Integrate EJ/DACs



The EJ/DAC Caucus will be relying on every other Caucus to identify areas where EJ/DAC concerns could/should be integrated. Some examples can be found in the 2009 Water Plan Update.

Develop goals and objectives that do the following:

- ✦ “... ensure that all Californians have access to safe drinking water.”
- ✦ “... California Tribes, both recognized and unrecognized, should provide goals and objectives to protect Tribal uses of water...”
- ✦ “... [provide] safe fish for communities that rely on fish as part of their subsistence diet.”
- ✦ “... restore and protect watersheds making use of existing community-based watershed councils and groups that are an under-utilized tool in maintaining and restoring California’s water resources.” Water Plan Update 2009, 7-43

Opportunities to Integrate EJ/DACs



Caucuses and the Public Advisory Committee might also consider the following within the context of their specific charges:

- ✦ The unique needs of DACs in relation to flood risk and recovery.
- ✦ Planning for water resilient DAC communities in the face of climate change.
- ✦ Affordability for DACs of any goals and objectives that would result in costs to ratepayers.
- ✦ Full inclusion of DACs in planning processes, in particular IRWMPs.
- ✦ Water supply reliability for DACs.

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Thank You



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